(b) whether to reduce the burden of tax cases from the High Courts and reduce the period of litigation, which routinely goes upto 15 years, Government had proposed to set up National Tax Tribunal;

(c) whether various tax professionals have been opposing the move to set up the National Tax Tribunal citing judicial and technical reasons; and

(d) whether the Bombay High Court has recently clamped a stay on setting up such a Tribunal?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) As on 28th February, 2006 an amount of Rs. 63,009 crore was locked up in litigation as arrears of income tax.

(b) to (d) Due to pendency of a large number of cases in the High Courts, large revenue is blocked in such litigations. This is adversely affecting the national economy. Hence, urgent measures are required to be taken to speed up taxation matters pending before High Courts. To achieve this objective, the National Tax Tribunal was established on 6th January, 2006 under the National Tax Tribunal Act, 2005. However, the Tribunal has not yet been made functional in view of stay granted by various High Courts including Bombay High Court.

National Judicial Council

3080. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute a National Judicial Council for taking action against judges of Supreme Court and High Courts;

(b) whether any amendment is proposed in the Constitution of India for doing away with the procedure of impeachment; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) The modalities for setting up of the National Judicial Council, in consultation with all the stake holders, are being worked out.

Conference of Chief Justices and Chief Ministers

†3081. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Conference of Chief Justices of High Courts and Chief

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Ministers of States was organized recently in New Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAWAND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A Conference of Chief Ministers of States and Chief Justices of High Courts was held on March 11, 2006 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Justice of India. The issues taken up for consideration in that Conference are given in the Statement *(See* below). Government has initiated action towards implementation of the various resolutions adopted in the said Conference.

Statement

Issues taken up for consideration in the conference of Chief Justices of High Courts and Chief Ministers of States

1. Reduction of arrears and speedy disposal of cases.
2. Modernisation and Computerisation of Courts and augmenting of infrastructure for them.
3. Enhancing the strength of Judges in High Courts and subordinate Courts.
4. Training for Judges and court staff
5. Setting-up of Fast Track Courts of Magistrates.
6. Granting Financial Autonomy to High Courts.
7. Establishment of E-Courts and video conferencing facilities.
8. Facility of reasearch Assistants and Law Clerks to High Court Juges.
9. Entrustment of selection of Subordinate Judicial Officers to High Courts, wherever already not entrusted.
10. Establishment of a permanent mechanism for implementation of resolutions of the Chief Justices Conference.